

SUPPLEMENTAL PRELIMINARY AMENDMENT
U.S. Appln. No. 10/568,671

AMENDMENTS TO THE SPECIFICATION

Please amend the specification as follows:

Page 3, lines 5-12, are amended as follows:

An object of the invention is to provide novel lactic acid bacteria that can achieve higher mucosal immunostimulation and host defense mechanism enhancement, as compared with those already researched and developed by the inventors, and that are useful as probiotics, and also provide end products containing such lactic acid bacteria (foods and beverages such as fermented milks and lactic acid bacteria beverages).

Page 3, line 21 to Page 5, line 16, is being replaced by the following:

The present invention provides the inventions outlined in items 1 to 7 below.

Item 1. A composition comprising a strain of lactic acid bacteria selected from the group consisting of *lactobacillus* ONRIC b0239 (FERM BP-10064) and *lactobacillus* ONRIC b0240 (FERM BP-10065), and an edible carrier, the composition being capable of stimulating mucosal immunity and being in the form of a food or beverage.

Item 2. The composition according to Item 1 which is a fermented milk, lactic acid bacteria beverage, fermented vegetable beverage, fermented fruit beverage, or fermented soymilk beverage.

Item 3. The composition according to Item 1 which is the form of granules, powders, tablets, effervescent tablets, or puddings.

Item 4. A pharmaceutical composition for human mucosal immunostimulation comprising a strain of lactic acid bacteria

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selected from the group consisting of *lactobacillus* ONRIC b0239 (FERM BP-10064) and *lactobacillus* ONRIC b0240 (FERM BP-10065), and a pharmaceutically acceptable excipient or diluent.

Item 5. A pharmaceutical composition for promoting human IgA comprising a strain of lactic acid bacteria selected from the group consisting of *lactobacillus* ONRIC b0239 (FERM BP-10064) and *lactobacillus* ONRIC b0240 (FERM BP-10065), and a pharmaceutically acceptable excipient or diluent.

Item 6. A method of stimulating mucosal immunity in a human subject in need of such stimulation comprising administering to said human subject the composition of Item 1 or 4.

Item 7. A method of promoting IgA production in a human subject in need of such IgA production promoting treatment comprising administering to said human subject the composition of Item 1 or 5.

Page 5, line 22 to Page 6, line 2, is amended as follows:

The strains of lactic acid bacteria of the invention are newly isolated and obtained from natural products by separation and screening processes as described below and have been deposited by the inventors. These strains are termed *Lactobacillus* ONRIC b0239 (FERM BP-10064) and *Lactobacillus* ONRIC b0240 (FERM BP-10065).

Page 31, line 19 to Page 32, line 1, is amended as follows:

The present invention provides novel lactic acid bacteria that have excellent IgA production-inducing capabilities and are effective for providing improved human mucosal immunostimulation, particularly intestinal immunostimulation, and reinforcing the host defense system, and compositions

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containing the bacteria. More specifically, the compositions in the form of foods or pharmaceutical products are provided.